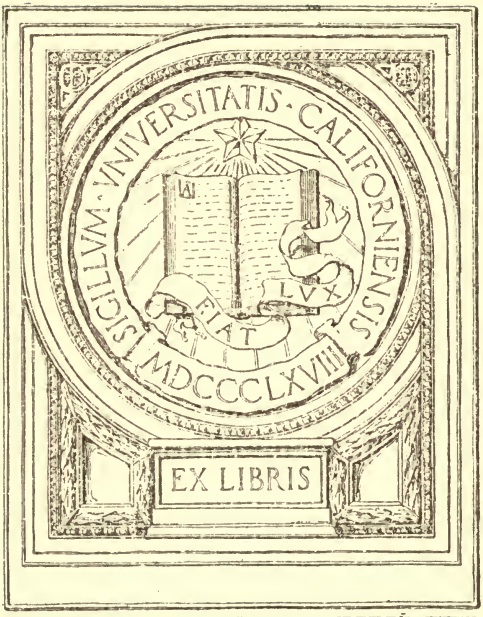
MORE TRUTH THAN POETRY

JAMES J. MONTAGUE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JAMES J. MONTAGUE

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BY

JAMES J. MONTAGUE

WITH PREFACE BY

IRVIN S. COBB

UNIV. OF CALIFORNIA

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PREFACE

By Irvin S. Cobb

As a general proposition prefaces to books are as unnecessary from the consumer's point of view as shells are to oysters. But it is fashionable for a book to wear a preface and an oyster to wear a shell; the net result being to make it more difficult for the consumer to get to the real meat of the contents—book or bivalve, as the case may be.

This book of Jim Montague's—he signs himself James, but don't believe it; his real name is Jim—needs no preface from me or anyone else. The stuff he writes travels on its own merits. Every day he turns out a column mainly verse; every day newspapers all over America print it and every day hundreds of thousands of people read it and find it worth while. "Give us this day our daily Montague," they say. Or if they don't say it they think it. And if ever Jim quit answering their prayer a roar of protest reaching from coast to coast would go up.

The answer is simple. It isn't so much that what Montague writes always is sane and always is humorous and always is timely. It's because there radiates from what he writes a kindliness and a wholesomeness, a sweetness—what for lack of a

better name we call the human touch. That's Montague all over—he is kindly and he is gentle and he is human. I state without fear of successful contradiction that he is one of the most regular human beings inhabiting this planet at the time of writing. He is that most rare thing—a humorist who also is a humanist.

Some men who have the gift of wit insist on taking a bird's-eye view of the world. Peering down from the rarefied atmosphere of the higher criticism upon the swarming atoms miles below, such a one takes his pen in hand and writes, "What fools *those* mortals be!" With Montague it is different. He is of the people, by the people, for the people. Which is exactly why he is so popular with the people. He laughs with them; not at them.

The present volume is made up mainly of things of his which already have appeared in the daily press. They are here compiled and presented in book form because a great many persons regard them as being worthy of perpetuation in this guise. I am pleased to count myself one of that large and—I trust—influential group. From so full a collection of worth-while verse as is here presented it is hard to make selections and say that this is better than that, or that that excels some other. Without undertaking to pick winners from a field made up of likely candidates for favor, I nevertheless am constrained to say that my favorites are "Healthy" and "Thoughts on Pie" in the Dough-

boy Ditties and "The Sleepytown Express" which comes at the beginning of the volume. I like the first two because, to my way of thinking, they most fitly express the real sentiments of the real American soldier in foreign service, and I like the last named because in it I have found a thing that Gene Field might have done, and a sentiment that every father of a baby has felt. No bachelor could have written "The Sleepytown Express." No man who didn't have babies could have written it.

As I said at the beginning, most prefaces are unnecessary. I'm sure this one is. All the same I am glad the opportunity to write this preface came my way because it has given me an opportunity to speak a sincere word of approbation for the work of a man who in twenty-odd years of active journalism has made fewer enemies and more friends than any other man in journalism known to me.

THE author acknowledges the courtesy of *Hearst's Magazine,* the New York *American* and the New York *World* for permission to reprint some of the verse included in this volume.

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MORE TRUTH THAN POETRY

MORE TRUTH THAN POETRY

THE SLEEPYTOWN EXPRESS

JUST beyond the rainbow's rim a river ripples down
Beneath a bridge, around a bend, and flows through Sleepytown—
Through Sleepytown, where goblins toil to fashion wondrous toys
And make up fascinating games for little girls and boys.
And automobiles, just the size for little hands to drive,
Await to whirl you all about as soon as you arrive.
But no one ever is allowed in Sleepytown, unless
He goes to bed in time to take the Sleepytown Express!

I know a foolish little boy who always starts to whine
When he is asked to trot upstairs before it's half-past nine.
And often he will stamp his feet and shake his tousled head,
And make a racket, even then, when he is sent to bed.

Of course, when he has said his prayers it always
is too late
To catch the Sleepytown Express—it starts at half
past eight.
And so, in all his long, long life—he's five years old
this fall—
That little boy has never been to Sleepytown at all.

But other wiser little boys, and little girls as well,
As soon as 8 o'clock has struck rush right upstairs,
pell-mell,
Get off their clothes and say their prayers, just of
their own accord,
And, when the train comes rolling in, they're there
to climb aboard.
Then through a long, delightful night they wander
up and down
And have a most exciting time in queer old Sleepy-
town;
And not for cake or anything that children could
possess
Would any of them ever miss the Sleepytown
Express!

THE DREAM

All smudgy was the pillowcase
That used to be so white,
For little Tommy's little face
Was dirty every night.
In spite of all his mother said
(And she had lots to say),
He always tumbled into bed
The way he'd been all day.

But sh!—when he was fast asleep
A horrid goblin came,
And in a voice all hoarse and deep
Called Tommy by his name!
"Get up!" he roared, "and wash your face,
You dirty little brat!
It's absolutely a disgrace
To go to bed like that!"

He dug his claws in Tommy's hair,
And through the shadows dim
He dragged him to the bathroom, where
He washed his face for him.
And with a brush he scrubbed and scrubbed
To clean off all the dirt;

Then with a towel rubbed and rubbed,
And goodness, how it hurt!

When Tommy wakened with a squeal,
He felt his tousled hair,
And, honestly, he seemed to feel
The goblin's claws still there!
The long, long years cannot erase
The memory of that fright,
Still, little Tommy's little face
Is dirty every night!

TO A SONG SPARROW

'Morning, Mr. Sparrow,
  Swinging to and fro,
Caroling a song o' spring,
  Through the falling snow.
What is it that you're singing?
  "Skies will soon be blue"?
Wish that we could ever be
  As full of hope as you.

Long before the robin
  Takes his northward way
You are here to pipe the cheer
  Of flower sprinkled May.
Still the winter tempests
  Blow like all possessed,
But nothing chills the hope that thrills
  Your dauntless little breast.

Last to leave in autumn,
  First to come in spring,
In snow or hail, or breeze or gale,
  You sing and sing and sing!
Cynic blue-jays flout you,
  Crows sneer, dour and glum;

Still you shout your tidings out
Of better days to come!

Even when your happy
Prophecies go wrong,
Beneath the lee of some great tree
You lift your voice in song.
And though the snowflakes whiten
Your sturdy little wing,
Your lilting voice proclaims, "Rejoice!
One sparrow makes a spring!"

STORIES

THERE's a ship upon the ocean, laden down with bars of gold,
With a wealth of precious jewels scattered loosely 'round the hold.
It will weather every tempest, for the ship is stanch and fine,
And will bring to me a fortune, for the cargo all is mine.
But, alas! the splendid vessel I shall never, never see,
For it's only in a story,
Just a happy little story,
That a little fellow told me, as he sat upon my knee.

There's a little kindly goblin who can scatter happiness,
Drive away the horrid spirits that bring trouble and distress,
And can give one wealth and wisdom, and he says that he'll be sure
To relieve my every sorrow if I'm ever old or poor.

But I fear I'll never find him, though I seek him
everywhere,
For he's only in a story,
Just a cheerful little story,
That a little fellow told me as I stroked his tousled
hair.

There's a great and friendly giant, who, when one
is wearied out,
Always comes to his assistance and will carry him
about.
You don't need an automobile when the giant comes
along,
For he's most accommodating, and as swift as he
is strong.
But I shall not call the giant when assistance I
require,
For he's only in a story,
Just a foolish little story,
That a little fellow told me as we sat beside the
fire.

Comes a funny little fairy, when the early starlight
gleams,
With a big and bulging basket full of most delightful
dreams;
Dreams of woods and dreams of rivers—every sort
of dreams he's got,
And he's always glad to give you quite the nicest
of the lot.

But I know within my chamber I shall never hear
his tread,
For he's only in a story,
Just a drowsy little story,
That a little fellow told me as I tucked him into bed.

THE EVENING SUIT

BUT yesterday he wore a bib,
And strewed his dinner all around him;
He slept beside me in his crib,
That is, sometimes he slept, confound him!
I still have got his cast-off shoe—
A rumpled wad of shabby leather,
The heel worn off, the toe worn through,
And seams that hardly hold together.

Last night, it was, I read to him
That old but unforgotten thriller
That movies have no lure to dim,
The tale of Jack the Giant Killer.
Last week he got his rocking horse,
A steed no rider's hand had humbled,
And baby nature took its course
(He barked his forehead when he tumbled).

And now a husky, hulking brute,
Fair looking though—I can't deny it—
Has got to have an evening suit,
And I, forsooth, have got to buy it.

Could he wear mine? The Fates forbid,
I'm wiser—I believe—and older,
But when I stand beside the kid
My head is level with his shoulder.

An evening suit—when yesterday
He prattled in his crib—a baby!
I count the years again, and say
In wan bewilderment—"Well, maybe."
An autocrat is Madame Style—
Perhaps that ought to satisfy me.
But where could I have been the while
That all those years were slipping by me?

AROUND THE CORNER

THERE'S a dirty little fellow, on a dirty little street,
Where the very richest children never have enough to eat;
Where the rattling, rag-stuffed windows let the winds of winter in
And the summer sunshine blazes on the roofs of rusty tin.
But amid the want and squalor of the crowded, sorry place,
You will find this little fellow with a jolly laughing face,
True that poverty's a burden that is dreary to endure,
But this dirty little fellow doesn't know that he is poor.

When Jack Frost arrives in winter and, his pencil in his hand,
Paints the window panes with pictures that are marvelous and grand,
He will shout aloud his pleasure as he looks at fields and streams
That are like the really-true ones he has visited—in dreams.

And the earliest springtime sunbeam is a miracle, indeed,
For it wakens from its slumber a delightful little seed
That will come sprouting upward from the earth all cold and dark,
And become a tree or flower—like the real ones in the park.

And at night, when all is darkness, and the trolleys rumble by,
He can see the twinkling flowers as they blossom in the sky;
And he often tries to count them, but so thickly are they set
In the velvet field of Heaven, he has never done it yet;
And he wonders, as he drowses, where the angels all can be,
That they do not pluck these blossoms—they're so beautiful to see;
He would gather them by millions and he'd take them home to keep—
And the little dirty fellow happily goes off to sleep.

Just a little dirty fellow, dwelling in eternal spring
With a wealth that all the riches of the world can never bring.

THE OWL

THE Owl that lives in the locust tree,
He hasn't a friend in the world—not he.
In the shelter of night he hides his face,
A cowering figure of black disgrace.
And yet the Owl, in a happier time,
Before he turned to a life of crime,
Could hold his tufted head as high
As any robin that fluttered by.
Clear was his conscience—clear as a bell—
And this is the story of how he fell.

One morning as on his perch he sat
He watched a pilfering, criminal cat
Climbing a tree to a robin's nest,
And—well, it's better to guess the rest.
And the Owl he said to himself, said he,
"If a cat can do it, then why not me?"
(His grammar, you notice, was quite absurd.
But the Owl was a most uncultured bird.)
And that very night I am pained to state,
A robin's baby he stole and ate!

And when in the morning they found him out
(And they proved his guilt beyond a doubt),

The birds came fluttering on his trail
And they tweaked his ears and they pulled his tail
Till he hid away in a swampy glen,
And never came out in the light again.
And now at the fall of the evening dew,
When you hear him shrieking, "To who? To who?"
As he sits alone on a locust limb,
You'll know what happened to him—to him.

THE PICTURES ON THE PANES

WHEN the autumn leaves are drifting in the breeze
that hurries by
Where the silent trees are outlined sharp and clear
against the sky;
When the birds have all departed, save a lonely
crow or two,
And the brook gleams cold and steely as it winds
the meadow through,
You can see beside the window, while the rosy twi-
light wanes,
Troops of little furry fairies, painting pictures on
the panes.

Pictures of enchanted forests filled with weird and
spectral light;
Every bough an arch of jewels, every blossom frosty
white;
Pictures of amazing cities such as only fairies see
In the world beyond the rainbow that is closed to
you and me;
Pictures of astounding creatures, unlike any that we
know;
Birds with sparkling, frosted feathers, beasts built
all of spotless snow.

Wrapped in snug and cold proof mantles, to and
fro the fairies pass,
Wielding tiny skillful brushes on the smooth and
shining glass.
All night long their filmy forests and slim towered
cities rise,
Till the morning star is hanging like a lantern in
the skies.
Then they pack their paints and vanish, and we'll
seek for them in vain
Till the sunshine of tomorrow fades their picture
from the pane.

Oft we wonder as we waken from some fascinating
dream
Of a jeweled cobweb forest and a slender silver
stream
That we're sure that we remember where in this
dull world of ours
We have ever chanced to wander through such
bright and filmy bowers,
Never even half-suspecting that we saw them long
ago
On the panes the fairies painted in the winter twi-
light's glow.

THE FAIRY FLEET

It won't be long till old Jack Frost comes sailing
from the skies,
A palette underneath his arms, all smeared with
glowing dyes,
And seats himself beside the stream to tint with
brilliant hues
In many a gaudy camouflage the fairy-folks' canoes;
And when the bending boughs let through the
autumn sunlight's gleam,
The fairy-folk will launch their craft and hurry
down the stream.

You've seen them passing oftentimes, when idling
by the shore,
You thought the zephyrs picked them up along the
forest floor
And tumbled them upon the waves—for then you
never knew,
That every little painted leaf bore up a fairy
crew,
Or that the fleet the little stream swept happily
away
Was peopled with a viewless host upon a holi-
day!

Stanch boats are these that skim along and dance
and dip and veer
And catch in eddies by the shore, or pause in mid-
career
To set a little scarlet sail to tack across the tide,
While fishes watch them overhead and swiftly dart
aside;
And if too close above the dam a derelict should
float
The fairy-folk leap overboard and get another boat.

And so, when brown October comes and on the trees
o'erhead
You see the leaves turn suddenly to gold and glow-
ing red
Just watch the stream that runs along—almost be-
neath your feet,
And presently you'll see it bears a many colored
fleet,
And though you may not see a soul in any bright
canoe
You'll never, never doubt again that fairy tales are
true!

THE SENTRY

I SEE a shadowy form arise
As I ascend the stair,
A voice I faintly recognize,
Calls gruffly, "Who goes there?"
But when I give the countersign
(Which, luckily, I know),
The guard who holds the outer line
Resumes his sentry go.

His wooden gun at "shoulder arms,"
He watches on the stair,
His ear alert for all alarms,
From land or sea or air;
And woe betide the German spy,
However shrewd and keen,
However serpentinely sly,
Who thinks to pass unseen.

Then guard mount, and the watch is done;
A little sleepy head
Is laid beside the wooden gun
Upon a trundle bed;

And as the twilight softly streaks
With red and gold the west,
With mother's kisses on his cheeks
The sentry takes his rest.

God grant that he may never know
The evil face of war,
Or do a lonely sentry go
Upon a far-off shore;
But if he's called to do his part
We know that he will bear
As valiant and as brave a heart
As when he watched the stair.

THE PIXIES' AEROPLANE

SLOPING from the Milky Way a pathway turns aside,
Goes winding 'round the kennels where the Puppy Stars abide,
Sweeps circling past Orion's Belt, then turns and twists again,
And if you'll follow it you'll find the Pixies' Aeroplane.
It's built of filmy spider webs, with gossamer for wings,
And travels smooth and easily on shining starbeam springs,
And every night across the sky you'll see it dance and flit
Till, when it spirals home again, the stars have all been lit.

It hurries forth from east to west, when first the day grows dim,
To light the tiny stars along the pale horizon's rim;
And then it circles farther up, and from one's trundle bed,
If he looks sharp, he soon will see the Evening Star glow red.

Then presently the Dipper gleams, clear outlined in the sky,
While onward toward the Milky Way the 'plane goes flashing by,
Until six thousand million stars are lighted, one by one,
When homeward sails the aeroplane—the Pixies' work is done.

Six thousand million stars that shed their shining silver beams
To light you on the way you take in quest of golden dreams—
Six thousand million stars to gleam in Heaven's velvet dome
When dreams dissolve—as dreams *will* do—and you come creeping home,
And just before the sun gets up, and yawns, and looks about,
Forth sail the Pixies in their 'plane to put the stars all out.
And when the Dawn comes rushing up, however hard you try,
You cannot find a single star in all the morning sky.

THE PRISONERS

THE frogs are piping in the pond, the robins in the trees
Spend all the pleasant afternoon in idleness and ease,
The woodchuck ventures from his lair and dozes in the sun
Without a guilty feeling that his school work isn't done,
Across the hills in shining squads the happy blackbirds wing,
No dingy school-room walls have they to shut them from the Spring.

But though the wind comes warm and soft to whisper at the door
And fresh new violets lift their heads above the forest floor,
And little hearts are all aglow, and longing to be free
And search for early blossoms with the newly wakened bee,
The prison hours drag along till four o'clock—and then—
A little play—a little sleep—then back to school again.

And when vacation time is here, with golden idle hours,
No more beside the river spring the first and fairest flowers,
The birds have left their emptied nests, the grass with dust is gray,
And gone is all the wondertime of April and of May.
And in that time how sad it was to hear the school bell ring
And know it sounded the command that summoned one from Spring.

And sadder still it is to think that in the years to be
When Spring shall call as Spring has called each year to you and me
The school will be in session still—a school of sterner hours
To prison longing hearts away from birds and bees and flowers,
For there is but one changeless rule for children and for men—
A little play—a little sleep—then back to school again!

THE EXPLORER

THE gale has borne him round the Horn,
The ice has locked him off Point Barrow;
All undismayed his course he's laid
Past Hatteras, straight as flies the arrow.
The mild monsoon, the wild typhoon
His journeyings have helped or hindered,
The hurricane has howled in vain;
He's only smiled and held to wind'ard.

The Northern Lights he's seen o' nights,
Where Behring's waters toss and tumble,
And coasting far off Zanzibar
He's heard the tropic thunders rumble.
Black man and brown he's hunted down
When they've denied him food and shelter;
The buccaneer, when he drew near,
Retreated seaward, helter-skelter.

Alone he sails the ocean trails
Content to be a grim, rough rover,
Content to brave the wildest wave
That rolls the rocking ocean over,

'Tis thus he dreams while sunlight streams
  Down through the swaying dooryard willow
But every night when fades the light
  He's safely anchored off Port Pillow!

WHY THE KATYDIDS SING

I NEVER knew why katydids keep singing all night long:
I guessed about it quite a bit, but every guess was wrong,
Until one day a little boy, who's wiser far than I,
Perched on my knee beside the fire and kindly told me why.
And then it seemed quite strange to me that I could not divine
That fairy-folk, like you and me, love music when they dine!

The fairies can't come out by day, for if they do, you see,
They just dissolve like sugar lumps that one puts in his tea,
And though they tried to teach the birds to sing for them at night,
The birds had got to build their nests, a task that needed light,
But katydids, although the dark is black as anything,
Can see like owls and bats, and so they don't care *when* they sing!

The fairies taught them songs and glees and choruses
and chants,
And how to sing in perfect time, as bands play at a
dance,
And, as they eat from fall of dusk until the peep of
dawn,
The katydids, though wearied out, keep singing on
and on,
Until the sun's first pearly rays are flung from east
to west,
And then, till twilight falls again, they go and take
their rest.

And so, some starlit August night, when down the
road you pass
You hear a host of choristers among the meadow
grass
And note that every one of them is singing quite in
time,—
As steady as the old hall clock, as rhythmic as a
rhyme—
You will not need a nature book to learn the reason
why,
Because, now you have read this tale, you'll know
as well as I!

MEMORY SWEET

Along the street of Memory
The little footsteps come and go
That wandered far away from me
So long ago.
The ringing voices I can hear;
I feel again the happy thrill,
Although the world, for many a year
Has seemed so still.

Beside the street of Memory
Where swings the old and broken gate,
Beneath the arching maple tree,
I stand and wait.
The street resounds with joyful noise,
There comes a fluttering rush—and then,
The laughing girls, the shouting boys
Are home again.

Along the street of Memory
I see the sunlight's golden glow
And happier days come back to me—
From long ago.

The days of rapturous delight,
  Of fairy grots, and elfin isles,
When life was beautiful and bright
  With children's smiles.

I wait there, as the sun sinks low
  Beside the street of Memory,
Where little feet tripped to and fro,
  And all too soon away from me.
And when the twilight gleams its last,
  I take my way, with silent tread,
Along the roadway of the past,
  Where they have fled.

THE SNOW FLOWERS

I DO not wonder any more where all the fairies go
When down the fields and through the trees the winds of winter blow,
No longer I'm uneasy lest the little fragile things
Are wandering in the open, where the frost can nip their wings.
A curly-haired philosopher, as wise as he is small,
And knows the ways of fairy-folks, has just explained it all.

Before the birds themselves can tell that winter's on the way,
And long before the autumn skies grow bleak and chill and gray,
The fairies hear a warning in the winds that sing at night
And pack their wee belongings up and take their hurried flight;
And in an hour, or maybe two, they're landed, every one,
Upon the clouds that float along up yonder near the sun.

And through the months of winter time, all warm
and bright up there,
They weave the raindrops into flowers and heap
them everywhere
Upon the foamy rolls of mist in piles so very great
That soon the clouds can bear no more, and break
beneath the weight.
And when the blossoms shower down upon the earth
below
We watch them falling—you and I—and cry "Just
see it snow!"

I've never steered an aeroplane across the winter
sky
To see the fairies at their work as I went sailing
by.
But I have watched the flakes that fall through many
wintry hours,
And I can solemnly aver that they *do* look like
flowers.
And so I'm no more troubled lest the north wind's
icy breath
Shall catch the fairies, unaware, and freeze them
all to death.

THE DREAM MAN

'ABOUT the time the midnight mists are sifting down the dew
And everyone is snug in bed except a cat or two,
When little girls and little boys, all wearied out with play
Are waiting, oh! so quietly, until another day—
Along the street outside there comes a funny shuffling sound,
The footsteps of the little man that brings the dreams around.

'All sorts and kinds of dreams he has—he keeps them in a sack,
And when he stops outside a door he takes it from his back
And picks out dreams of swimmin' holes, and dreams of grizzly bears
And dreams of toys and Santa Claus for every child upstairs,
He has to hurry through his work—there's lots to do—and yet
He gives to every single child the dream it ought to get.

He always knows the little boy who robbed the
pantry shelf,
When no one was around to see, and simply stuffed
himself,
And in that little rascal's dream he puts a horrid
sprite,
Who perches grimly on his chest and pummels him
all night;
While in the dreams of little girls who hate to go
to bed
He drops great ugly crocodiles with eyes of flaming
red.

But when he finds a little child that's done the best
it could
He fixes up a pleasant dream of fairies in a wood,
And animals that talk to one—and even sing a
song—
A dream of nothing else to do but play the whole
day long,
And not a child by any craft, or stratagems or
schemes
Can ever fool the little man that brings around the
dreams!

PETER PAN

Oh! little, wistful fellow, reaching out a slender hand
Beyond the rainbow bridge that leads to Never, Never Land,
What magic drink have you distilled from morning meadow dew,
To keep old vandal Father Time from laying hand on you?
How often must you mix the charm, and from a buttercup
Sip secretly, to hold you safe from ever growing up?

Oh! wonderful philosopher, how was it that you knew
That all the shadowy fairy-folk were really, really true?
Who told you that in Grown-Up Land the things we call affairs
Are only trifling vanities, or hard and sordid cares?
Who made you want to stay a boy? Who taught you that sad truth
That one goes on a weary road who travels forth from Youth?

Oh! little, loving minister of simple childish joys,
Worth more than all the lesson books to little girls and boys!
The knowledge that is treasured most in wonder-loving hearts
No dog-eared primer pictures forth, no pedagogue imparts,
And many a child would never learn that fairy tales are true
In all their dull and prosy lives, unless they learned from you.

Oh! welcome little wizard! How you wave the years away,
And take us Grown-Ups back again to golden yesterday!
A web of half-forgotten dreams before our eyes you weave,
And we behold your fairy friends; behold them and believe!
Again their whispering in the trees we hear and understand,
Again we walk the rose-strewn road through Never, Never Land.

CIVILIZATION

WHAT shall we do to punish them—these babes that disobey
The mandate of our sacred law that each must pay his way?
Unbidden guests—unwelcome guests—they boldly come to share
The bread of hungry families where none has bread to spare.
They ask for love, they ask for care, as if these things were free.
And we who hold that law is law—what shall our judgment be?

We'll shut them up in babyhood through summer's withering heat,
Or winter's cold, in tenements along a dirty street.
And they shall learn what sickness means, and misery and pain;
And Want shall sit beside their beds, and grin in cold disdain.
And soon the tears shall cease to dim their round and wondering eyes,
And none shall come to comfort them or still their puny cries.

And some shall grow to weazened youth, and toil
the long days through
For there will be no lack of men to find them work
to do.
And some, in whose neglected souls the baser pas-
sions flame,
Shall learn the dreadful trades of crime, or walk
the ways of shame.
And others shall escape our wrath—for Death
stands always by
To offer to the frail and weak the mercy we deny.

And he shall bear them whence they came, where
skies are always fair
And love for all created things is free as Heaven's
air.
And haply they shall learn to laugh, and play among
the flowers
Afar from all the suffering of this grim earth of
ours.
And having once found happiness they'll never come
again
As questing souls to overcrowd this world of law
and men!

THE END OF THE DAY

WHEN the fiery day is ended, and in every East Side street
Throngs of haggard men and women still are drooping with the heat,
Round the corner come the White Wings dragging snaky coils of hose,
And along the steaming pavement soon a gleaming fountain flows.
Then the children swarm in legions from the stoops along the way,
Wading through the foaming rivers, dancing in the showering spray,
Running over spouting rainbows where a leak has burst the line,
Shouting to the weary grown-ups, "Come on in —the water's fine!"

They have never known the rapture of a romp along the shore,
Where the hissing spindrift rises and the breakers roll and roar.

Cramped within the brick-bound city, they have never felt the joys
That the swimming hole has ready for the sun-burned country boys.
But they still are little children, and no torrid August sun
Has the power to deprive them of their honest right to fun.
And though pale and frail and drooping, still with eager shouts they throng
To the thrilling, cooling water, when the White Wings come along.

Years have bent and changed us grown-ups—though the day brings heat or rain,
Be it hot or blustery weather, still we grumble and complain,
Fretting over little troubles, always murmuring the song
With the whining, dreary burden of "Whatever Is, Is Wrong."
But no bitter Winter blizzard, never sweltering August heat,
Can abate the bubbling spirits of the youngsters of the street.
And though always round about them stern-faced poverty abounds,
They are just light-hearted children when the White Wings make their rounds.

FREEDOM

THE pain that distorted
  The frail little form
Has vanished away
  Like a midsummer storm.
The work-weary fingers
  Lie white on his breast;
At last they are idle—
  For now he can rest.

Scarce more than a baby,
  They found him one day
Amid the foul reek
  Of an alley—at play,
They seared his child's soul
  With their factory's blight,
They made him the thing
  That he was—till tonight.

And now it is over;
  The small hands are still
That labored so long
  In the terrible mill.

The pain has departed,
The fever is past;
The wan little toiler
Is resting at last!

THE MINE SWEEPERS

THEY never had a half a chance at glory;
To them the joy of battle was denied;
The nation never thrilled to read the story
Of how they lived and toiled and how they died;
Unseen, unmarked, they went where duty called them,
On mine-encircled seas their nets were spread;
No storms delayed, no dangers grim appalled them,
Though death was always lurking just ahead.

Day in, day out, their dreary vigil keeping,
As on across the tide their vessels stole,
Alert of mind, untroubled and unsleeping,
They calmly kept their perilous patrol.
And if there came a flash, a roar of thunder,
And smothered in a whirl of hissing foam
A ship and all aboard of her went under,
No cable sent the tragic story home.

They brought to port no submarine as booty,
Their shouts of triumph ringing in the breeze,
It never was their high and glorious duty
To scourge these slinking serpents from the seas.

They wore no crown of fame, yet their devotion
For victory's mighty progress cleared the way,
Made safe an army's path across the ocean
And baffled craft and cunning of their prey.

They wore no crown of fame—and yet their story
When half its glowing chapters have been told
Will write their names upon the roll of glory
In fine resplendent characters of gold!

MY WEALTHY NEIGHBORS

WHEN, nose to grindstone, I must sit
  Engaged upon my daily labors
I cannot help but sigh a bit,
  In envy of my wealthy neighbors.
They live up yonder by the hill
  Until October—never later
For when the autumn breeze blows chill
  They're off to follow the Equator.

They never have a thing to do
  But gad about with lordly leisure,
The whole delightful summer through,
  Their life is just one round of pleasure.
I see them often in the lane
  That winds along the vale below us
And want to speak—but I refrain,
  For they don't seem to care to know us.

They'd not receive me should I call,
  Their manners are extremely airy,
And this I can't explain at all,
  For they're so full of life and merry.

All day I watch them hurry by,
Among the fields and trees and flowers,
And when the sunset paints the sky
They'll often sit and sing for hours.

I envy them their happy lot,
I'm sometimes filled with base resentment
That these exclusive folks have got
So much that makes for sweet contentment.
But when a tomcat happens by
And home the frightened father hurries
No longer do I sit and sigh,
For even robins have their worries.

CASEY ON THE CORNER

THE chauffeurs jam their feet down hard; the brakeshoes creak and grind,
The surging traffic stream is stalled for twenty yards behind;
The rumble of the trucks is stilled, while with a massive hand
A husky son of Erin gives imperious command,
And passers-by stand eager-eyed, in rain or snow or sleet,
To watch Patrolman Casey help the kids across the street.

Like little boats about a ship they circle 'round his form
And safely make their way to port, however thick the storm,
Five youngsters clinging to his coat, a toddler in each arm
They pass the panting juggernauts, secure from hurt or harm.
And when the last of all the fleet has reached the friendly shore
The whistle shrills its signal, and the stream roars on once more.

He's no Apollo Belvedere, all critics will agree,
And many a foolish chauffeur knows how hard his fist can be;
While even motoring gentlemen who go a bit too far
Regret their indiscretion when he leaps aboard the car.
But just the same, to most of us, it always is a treat
To watch Patrolman Casey help the kids across the street.

THE WAIL OF A PUP

MAN thinks he plays a lot of parts
  Before his years are rounded up;
But say! He really never starts,
  He ought to try to be a pup—
To be a pup, and have a boy
  With fresh ideas every day
Who takes a wild and fiendish joy
  Inventing parts for him to play.

I've been a Boche in Belleau Wood
  And had Yank bullets shot at me;
I've been a Turk and I have stood
  The gunfire at Gallipoli,
I've been the Kaiser oftentimes
  And had a noose about my neck,
The while I listened to my crimes
  And rapidly became a wreck.

I've been a hook and ladder horse
  And had them run me off my feet;
I've been a thief, while half the force
  Pursued me madly down the street.

I've figured at a barbecue—
  The part assigned me was the ox—
But just as dinner time was due
  I always wriggled from the box.

I've been a lion and a bear,
  A tiger and a Hottentot,
And other creatures strange and rare,
  But always something that got shot.
I've been old Jonah, and the whale—
  A cracker crate—has thrown me up,
I've been marooned, I've been in jail—
  And still it's fun to be a pup!

DISGRACED

My teacher says to me to-day
So's all the class could hear:—
"I thank you for that nice bouquet
You brought this morning, dear."
Of course she'd made a bad mistake.
Somebody'd thought they'd be
Almighty smart if they could make
A teacher's pet of me.

I licked three fellers at recess,
They'll hold their tongues, I'll bet,
But forty-'leven girls, I guess,
Yelled at me: "Teacher's pet!"
I grabbed a couple by the hair,
But had to let 'em go
Before they even got a scare,
You can't lick girls, you know.

An' when we went inside again
The kids would grin an' say:—
"Who's teacher's little dear?" an' then
They'd point to that bouquet.

An' then in whispers they'd repeat
The words the teacher said,
While I just sat there in my seat
And wished that I was dead!

I'm goin' to ask my folks to go
And live some other place
Where all the kids I see won't know
About this here disgrace.
If I could run away to war
Then maybe I'd forget,
But I can't stick 'round here no more
And be a teacher's pet!

THE BABY

He's just a little, helpless mite,
Whose tender, trusting smile
And coos of rapturous delight
Are innocent of guile.
Too frail as yet to walk alone,
His little tongue untaught
To make his baby wishes known
Or tell his tiniest thought.

But pluck him from the cellar floor
Where eager and alert
He smears his little person o'er
With soot and grime and dirt,
And for what seems an hour or two
The imp will hold his breath
Until his face is fairly blue
And you're half scared to death!

So soft and flower-like he seems,
So gentle and so mild,
A thing of fairy-woven dreams,
A weak, defenseless child,

No will to gain his heart's desire,
All wisdom yet to learn,
The feeble, newly kindled fire
As yet can barely burn.

But try to take away the shears
Which he so firmly grips
The while the yowling kitten's ears
So joyously he clips.
A certain firmness he'll reveal;
For on the rug he'll drop
And stiffen like a frozen eel,
And scream until you stop!

ALWAYS THE GOAT

WHENEVER the trolleymen go on a strike
And the managers haughtily say
They can tie up the lines for a month if they like
And they won't get a penny more pay,
The general outcome is always the same,
For whether the men get their raise
Or swallow the grouch and go back to the game,
The public is walloped both ways.

Whenever the railroad men voice discontent
And the Manager says with a sneer
That he'll never come through with another red cent
If he don't turn a wheel for a year,
One side or the other wins out in the end,
But whether they grant or refuse
The wages for which the conductors contend,
The public, dear reader, will lose.

Whenever the milkmen get suddenly sore
And swear with irascible unction
That unless they are paid quite a little bit more
They plan upon ceasing to function,

Perhaps they will get it, perhaps they will not;
But what is the difference to us?
We know when it's over the public has got
To step in and pay for the fuss.

For whether the strikers declare it a strike
Or the bosses declare it a lockout,
We are sure in advance that the public's one chance
Is to put up its chin for the knockout.

A CALEDONIAN'S FAREWELL TO JOHN BARLEYCORN

GUIDBY, auld John, I loved ye weel,
When I was young, and strong and husky,
And when my tuppence bought a deal
O' braw, invigoratin' whusky.
With one wee bottle by my side
I'd sleep beneath the bonnie heather;
A saxpence kept me stupefied
For days together.

The cost o' kilts, it vexed me sair,
And when I parted with a shillin'
For food, I took especial care
To see that it was verra fillin'.
I grudged whate'er I squandered on
The coals, the taxes and the victual,
But I maun give ye credit, John,
Ye cost me little.

But losh! the price they're askin' now,
For e'en the cheapest kind o' toddy,
A laird himsel' might well allow
Would fair infuriate a body.

An so, auld John, I trust ye'll not
  Believe me cauld, or flinty-hearted,
But ye're too costly for a Scot,
  It's time we parted.

A PROBLEM

THOUGH science tells us, out of hand,
That there is not an indication
That animals can understand
A word of human conversation,
Last night when we conversed about
A needful substitute for meat,
Our little Fido hurried out
And went careering down the street.

And when we said that in Bombay
A hungry proletariat
Much relishes a consommé
Whose chief ingredient is cat,
There was a rush across the floor,
A muffled sound of feline hissing,
And tabby bolted through the door
And now is numbered with the missing.

We also said all household pets
Were works of supererogation,
And, though it filled us with regrets,
They ought to help to feed the nation.

And then we heard a scream of rage,
And with a look of blank despair,
The parrot burst his gilded cage
And quickly went away from there.

We don't insist that these are acts
Which throw great Science in confusion;
We merely state the simple facts
And let you draw your own conclusion.
We know that Mr. Hornaday
And zoologic sharps will swat us
But all the same we're free to say
We sort of think the creatures got us!

THE BABY'S BOOZE

In Newport they are discussing the regulating of the children's drinking.—NEWS ITEM.

'Tis never a hygienic plan to let the baby rush the can,
Lest by and by with gin and rye
He grows unduly chummy;
Before he gratifies his thirst his gentle governess should first
Take care to choose a brand of booze
That won't affect his tummy.

A highball every day at ten, a brace of cocktails now and then
And at his lunch a mellow punch
Of sugar, milk and whisky,
May not impair his childish charm or do his morals any harm
But absinthe slings are dreadful things
And very, very risky.

If baby finds he cannot dine without a glass or two of wine,
Some good champagne might clear his brain,
But heed this timely warning:

If ever he's allowed to drink the fifteen-cents-a-quart
red ink
Before he goes to his repose,
He'll have a head next morning.

If you should find that he prefers the yellow, green
and brown liqueurs,
Correct his taste with eager haste;
For these are dissipations
Which those most soaked in stimulants unanimously
view askance;
They are not fit a little bit
For infantile potations.

If thus the baby's appetite for spirits is directed
right,
And if his tum does not succumb
To crumbling cramps and colics,
He'll learn to drink the proper way, and if he's
lucky, some fine day
Perhaps he'll win a nice place in
A home for alcoholics!

THE SAME OLD STORY

WHEN Julius Cæsar went to town
To purchase steaks and chops and such,
He tried to beat the butchers down
And swore their prices were too much.
"Two cents a pound for steak," he roared,
"Why, man, that's nothing short of crime.
You butchers are a greedy horde,
It cost but one in Noah's time!"

When Ollie Cromwell went to shop
For beef and mutton and the like,
He said if prices didn't drop
He'd spit the butchers on a spike.
"Six cents a pound for steak," he said.
"It's more than honest men can pay.
You folks are robbers, on the dead,
It cost but two in Cæsar's day!"

Today when we go out and find
That beef is eighty cents a pound,
We tarry there and speak our mind
And scatter savage words around.

'Twas ever thus, in every age,
In every time and clime and season
The price of meat has made men rage
And always with abundant reason.

THE CONDUCTOR AND THE LADY

BILL BLICKETT was conductor of a commutation train,
Claire Clickett was a typist, with an air of high disdain.
She shuddered when he winked at her as he swung down the aisle.
Her manner said: "How dare you, sir?" when he essayed to smile.
And with forbidding haughtiness her chewing gum she'd munch,
When Blickett snipped her ticket with a sentimental punch.

She loved a red-haired broker's clerk whose name was Jaspar Gee;
He often rode beside her on the seven-thirty-three.
He looked upon her fondly, and told her she was pretty,
And sometimes held her hand in his clear in to Jersey City.
And Blickett punched her ticket, with bitter heart and grim
And murmured to the brakeman: "Just wait till I get him."

One day a train despatcher tried to cultivate the knack
Of passing two expresses on a single stretch of track.
And Claire and Jaspar found themselves—as one of the results—
Projected into Newark Bay as from two catapults.
She cried to him to save her, but he only paused to state:
"I haven't time to save you, too; I'm thirty minutes late."

And then a strong arm circled her, and Blickett's massive hand
With many a stout and sturdy stroke propelled her safe to land.
"I've got the coward now," he thought, "I knew I'd get my chance,"
As he conveyed his burden to the nearest ambulance.
Claire looked upon him coldly, and she tossed her pretty head,
"Excuse me, sir, I've got to find my Jaspar now," she said.

Don't ask me why she acted so; I judge it was because
In matters that concern the heart—well, that's how woman does.

THE BEAUTY AND THE BUTCHER

BECAUSE he was a butcher's boy
  Steve Stuffing's love for Graycie Grady
Served only greatly to annoy
  That fair, fastidious young lady.
In vain he told her that his work
  In such a sphere was uncongenial,
She said, "You're just a butcher's clerk—
  A low meat-mutilating menial."

"I'll win your hand," he said, "or bust,
  You haughty, zero-hearted charmer,
Some day I'm going to own a trust—
  A beef trust—like J. Ogden Armour."
"Reluctant as, of course, I am,"
  Said she, "your purpose to disparage
The horrid hand that handles ham
  Can never clasp my hand in marriage!"

Awhile on faith his fancy fed,
  He hoped remorse would overcome her,
Until next afternoon he read
  That she had wed a Newport plumber.

Did he gulp down a fatal pill,
  Like heroes in romance's pages?
No, sir. He sold more meat, until
  The butcher had to raise his wages.

He soon acquired a partnership,
  And, being crafty, like Iago,
He got a deadly vise-like grip
  On all the meat outside Chicago.
By leaps and bounds his fortune grew,
  Because of shrewdly planned expansion,
Until within a year or two
  He built a stately Newport mansion.

Steve drew a plumbing contract, which,
  With heating, baths and ventilation,
Would make the winning bidder rich
  Beyond his wildest expectation.
He spread his contract as a lure—
  He grimly gloated when he let it,
Because he had made very sure
  That Graycie's husband did not get it.

Some men succeed because they're born
  To brains or wealth or high position;
Some men succeed because they're torn
  From childhood with a great ambition.
And others, quite a lot, you'll find,
  Succeed, as did our young friend Stephen
Because they just make up their mind
  That they are going to get even.

THE BLESSINGS OF HARD TIMES

WHEN farmer Jones's Berkshire hog was living on the farm
His personality was gross, his manner had no charm;
He daily wallowed in the mud, he guzzled from his trough
And grew a mass of embonpoint which nothing could take off.
And while his body waxed so great that he could hardly crawl,
His brains became so dull and thick he couldn't think at all.

But when one day the farm burned down the Berkshire hog got loose
And had to put his thickening brains to very active use.
Nobody came to feed him now; he had to hustle round
And use his nerve and judgment to provide his daily found.
And soon new muscles thewed his flanks instead of flabby fat,
And his once soggy countenance became worth looking at.

There is no startling moral to this tale of Jones's
swine,
Except that when one has to work before one sits
to dine,
And has to keep expenses down, the life he learns
to lead
Is pretty sure to keep his brains from running
all to seed.
And though no doubt it will surprise a lot of soft-
raised men,
A little pinch of poverty won't hurt them—now
and then.

THE ROAD TO SUCCESS

WHAT good will it do you to work like a horse?
There isn't a blessed thing in it;
The fellow you work for expects it, of course,
But don't let him kid you one minute.
Don't be like the come-ons you see round a shop
Who plug till they're winded and wheezy.
You'll find that the fellow that gets to the top
Is the lad who takes everything easy.
This wisdom I gleaned from the earnest remarks
Of a midnight sojourner in one of the parks!

The average boss on a job doesn't know
One-half of the things you've forgotten.
Come back at him snappy and say, "Is that so?"
If he says that your work's getting rotten.
Inform him your motto is always to keep
All foremen and such in their places,
And some day you'll rise to the top of the heap
And spend half your time at the races.
This method of gaining success must be right,
I heard it proclaimed in the breadline last night!

Whenever you feel you have earned a day's pay,
Drop the job as a kid drops a thistle;
You always can think of some nice, stalling way
To loaf till the toot of the whistle.
The men who own houses in Millionaire's Row,
With horses and autos and flowers
And that sort of stuff, never got all that dough
By sticking at work after hours.
This means of advancement I'm sure cannot fail,
It was passed out to me through the bars of a jail.

"AND WHEN THEY FALL"

Many of the former nobility of Europe who were taught domestic arts and crafts in their youth as an example to the lower classes are now working at mean occupations in Turkey and Southeastern Europe.—CABLE DESPATCH.

WHERE is the Grand Duke Ruffanuff, who stole the
Czar's first wife?
Who used to shoot and burn and loot,
While all his suite would follow suit,
And never gave a single hoot
For threats upon his life?
He's mandatory of a mule just out of Teheran;
He's working for Bazouk Pasha as second hired
man!

Where is Graf von Gipfelstein, that man of noble
rank,
Who when he sat at baccarat,
Would bet a million with éclat,
And with rare nonchalance stand pat
Until he broke the bank?
You'll find him down in old Stamboul, if you are
passing by,
He's mandatory of the pigs in Izzak-Issik's sty!

Where is Countess von der Schtuff, that ravishing
brunette
Whose wiles and arts broke scores of hearts,
Who raided all the jewel marts—
The belle of many foreign parts—
Is she in Europe yet?
Across the Turkish moors she bears a bucket full
of corn
She's mandatory of a cow beside the Golden Horn!

AS TO THE CAVEMAN

I LIKE to read these cave-men tales;
There is a strange, romantic glamour
In books which tell of whiskered males
Who did their wooing with a hammer;
Who sauntered about the town
Until they saw a lovely creature,
Picked up a rock and knocked her down,
And dragged her, screaming, to the preacher!

I've often thought that if to-day
One might knock down an Aphrodite
Who had the crust to say him nay,
Girls wouldn't be so highty-tighty.
If one could win 'em with a club,
A rock, or any missile handy,
He'd save a lot on high-priced grub,
And motor rides, and flowers and candy!

And then, again, I think perhaps
Those yarns of how young folks were mated
Were penned by prehistoric chaps
Who probably exaggerated.

I've often wondered, as I sat
  Perusing these delightful pages,
If girls *could* change as much as that
  Despite the countless passing ages.

For since the days of Mother Eve
  'Twas never safe to go on wooing,
Without so much as "by your leave,"
  If she informed you, "Nothing doing."
And therefore I begin to fear
  That these Silurian romances
Which I believed for many a year
  Were nothing more than pleasing fancies!

THE NEW JURISPRUDENCE

(*In a recent action, one lawyer knocked his legal opponent down*)

No longer need word-warring lawyers consume
The time of the judge and the jury
With dreary delays while with phrase upon phrase
They lash themselves into a fury.
Bill Shakespeare would never have found any fault
With our modern attorneys at law,
Who substitute feints for amended complaints
And pleas with a punch to the jaw.

If a lawyer declares, "In the counsel's remarks
A certain distortion I trace,"
The counsel's reply is a smash in the eye,
Which cuts all delay from the case.
The old-time expression, "My learned young friend,"
Is heard in the courtroom no more;
There's a biff! and a bing! and a good right-arm swing,
And counsel wakes up on the floor.

Hereafter attorneys with cases to try
As soon as they've got their retainers
Won't bone up on torts and the New York reports
But will work up their case at a trainer's.
No weary citations they'll read to the court,
No evidence they will put in,
But they'll learn how a punch can be sent to the lunch,
For the man with the wallop will win.

And judges, instead of devoting their time
To passing on motions and pleas,
Must learn how to quote what one Queensberry wrote
For the guidance of ring referees.
No longer through months litigation will drag;
Ten minutes will settle a suit.
And we're willing to bet that Jack Dempsey will get
The practice of Elihu Root!

FAIR INES

Borrowing a Bit from T. Hood.

Oh, have you seen fair Ines?
She's got a new sedan,
And vows that she can drive the thing
As well as any man.
But since she's ditched a trolley car
And smashed a moving van,
Although I hate to doubt her word,
I hardly think she can.

I saw thee, lovely Ines,
Come wabbling down the street.
An unsuspecting traffic cop
Was walking off his beat,
And when you zigzagged into him
And knocked him twenty feet,
The little speech he made to you
I wouldn't dare repeat.

I'm glad that I, fair Ines,
Was not amid the crash
When down Fifth Avenue to-day
You made that spiral dash.

Were there upon the long, long street
No flivvers you could smash,
That you must wreck a limousine
That cost twelve thousand, cash?

Reflect again, fair Ines!
Your friends cannot connive
In your assertion that it's rot
To say you cannot drive,
When of your neighbors' motor cars
But eight per cent survive.
And of the dogs along your street
Not one is left alive!

Farewell, farewell, fair Ines;
No lady I have met
Whenever she encountered me
Has left me so upset.
I still am on this earthly sphere,
But cheerfully I'll bet
And give you any odds you ask
That you will get me yet!

THE END OF A PERFECT BRAY

By operating on a mule scientists have succeeded in making him voiceless.—NEWS ITEM.

"A few can touch the magic string,
And noisy Fame is proud to win them.
Alas for those who never sing,
But die with all their music in them!"
OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES.

How often, as the dusk drew near
And vagrant breezes stirred the pool,
We've paused beside the path to hear
The evening carol of the mule.
A simple and unstudied strain,
As from a heart that overflowed,
It rose and fell and rose again,
And died in echoes down the road.

It lacked the robin's silver trill,
The melody was often bad,
The nuances ill-spaced, but still,
It was the only song he had.

It had a certain zip and zest,
  A quality that seemed to soar—
The artless singer did his best,
  And nightingales could do no more!

But science, with its ruthless knife,
  These vibrant chords has learned to sever.
That song that spoke the joy of life
  In zigzag bars is stilled forever.
A kindly and impulsive brute
  In silence must pursue his ways,
The song upon his lips is mute,
  And all his days are brayless days.

Now, science may be right, of course,
  Perhaps the mule is no musician,
And merely brayed till he was hoarse
  To gratify a false ambition.
Perhaps the Muses passed him by;
  Caruso's genius may have missed him;
And yet it's sad that he must die
  With all that music in his system!

THE WAY OF THE WORLD

THE alley cat sat on a fence
And warbled his evening song,
And he made it plain with his weird refrain
That he fancied the world was wrong.
"Now look at the Persian cat," sang he,
"He never needs hunt for grub,
But can sit and purr and smooth his fur—
The lop-eared, long-tailed dub!

"I must hunt my chow in the garbage cans
And always must keep an eye,
As I stoop to eat, on the nearest street,
For the curs that are passing by.
I must swiftly shoot for a dry goods box
At the sound of the least alarm,
While he dozes away on a couch all day,
Where he never can come to harm.

"He drinks his cream from a porcelain cup
That only his lips can touch,
And they get a vet when he gets upset
If he foolishly eats too much.

He's patted and cuddled and fussed about,
  His life is a long delight,
While I must scrap to keep on the map;
  I tell you it isn't right."

The Persian cat stared sadly forth
  On the alley that stretched below,
"Oh, hum!" he said, "I have slept and fed.
  Existence is mighty slow,
Nothing to climb and nothing to chase,
  Not even a mouse or rat.
How much I'd give could I only live
  The life of that alley cat!"

COMING AND GOING

THREE years ago, or maybe more,
We noticed with profound misgiving
That everything began to soar
Connected with the cost of living.
Beefsteak became so dear and rare
We had to get along without it;
Rents rose with every month, and there
Was nothing we could do about it.

We sought out an economist,
Informed him of the situation,
Exhibited our market list
And asked him for an explanation.
Said he: "It's easy to explain:
The nation's passing through a crisis.
To fume and fret is quite in vain;
The war, you know, has boosted prices."

But when the war was done last Fall,
It struck us as a bit surprising
That prices didn't fall at all—
Instead of that, they kept on rising.

Expenses mounted more and more;
We watched with troubled perturbation
The wolf, who sat outside our door
And grinned with eager expectation.

Again we sought our learned friend
And said in accents low and humble:
"The war, dear sir, is at an end;
Pray, why do not expenses tumble?"
He said: "You must not fume and fret,
Just keep your temper, my advice is
The world is very much upset,
And peace, you know, has boosted prices."

ESSAY ON LIFE AND GARDENS

My roses hang diminished heads
And grow more sickly, hour by hour,
My wilting Persian lilac sheds
Its buds, before they ever flower.
I never tilled a garden plot
And hoped with joy to contemplate it,
That some voracious bug did not
Devour and assimilate it.

The slugs chew off the tulip tips,
The pansies fall before the weevil,
Around the poppies crowd the thripps—
Small squashy things, and bent on evil.
They swallow liquid nicotine,
Nor seem to feel the least revulsion,
They lap up quarts of Paris Green,
They thrive on kerosene emulsion.

I war upon them every day;
From bush to bush with brooms I hound them,
But they have an infernal way
Of slipping from my clutch. Confound them!

My flowers all are doomed, I know,
For I grow weary of endeavor,
And, while I rest, the insect foe
Keeps toiling on the job forever.

'Tis thus that thieves and burglars ply
Unflaggingly their base vacations,
Around the clock, while you and I
Seek sleep and other relaxations.
Ah, life would be one long delight
If preachers toiled like mischief-brewers,
And if apostles of the right
Had half the pep of evildoers.

ADS

With timid and affrighted eyes
I read the ads, and when I read 'em
And note the things they advertise
I suddenly find out I need 'em.
Fresh needs I've never known before
Imperil my hard-earned per diem;
I scan the list, and, what is more,
I go and buy 'em.

I saw an add about a farm
Afar from urban roar and rattle,
Where one may know the sylvan charm
Of growing fields and lowing cattle.
It spoke of birds upon a bough
Which pipe matutinal thanksgiving,
I read that ad three times—and now
That's where I'm living.

An automobile ad one day
Somehow attracted my attention:
It dwelt in an alluring way
On spiral gears and frame-suspension;

It waked a thirst to own that car,
And though for weeks and weeks I fought it—
You know what witching things ads are—
At last I bought it.

The men who write the ads must be
Well versed in some hypnotic system
They have a weird effect on me,
I simply never can resist 'em,
They've dissipated all my roll
For things they've sold to me, dod rot 'em
Expensive things—yet, on the whole
I'm glad I've got 'em.

TIME BRINGS CHANGES

WHEN thirst was young and cost us to maintain
A rather large per cent of our per diem,
We used to love to titillate our brain
With quartrains from the pen of Omar Khayyam.
Then every tavern portal stood agape,
No laws laid bans on bibulous enjoyment,
And getting jocund with the fruitful grape
Appeared to us a rather fine employment.

A book of verses culled beside the bar
(We didn't need the book; we used to spout 'em),
A friend or two, a highball—a cigar—
Combined, they had a rare delight about 'em.
And all the persons present would agree
That friends like us should never, never sunder,
And as for Omar Khayyam, there could be
No doubt he was one young Persian wonder.

From twenty-two to twenty-five, perhaps,
We knew by heart all Omar's many pages,
And held with two or three congenial chaps
That he was quite the marvel of the ages.

"What harm in getting boiled?" he seemed to say;
"If whisky's due to bowl you over—let it,
And as for life, it soon will flit away,
The wise way is to guzzle—and forget it."

But now that we have curbed our appetite
(For with more years we're more sedately gaited)
We do not stroll 'round taverns of a night
And never get the least illuminated.
We've changed our views on life to some extent,
We do not look on things the way we uster,
We're more reserved and placid and content
And Mr. Omar's lost a first-class booster.

PROOF

JOHN BURROUGHS, who's a shark on birds
(He classifies 'em by a feather),
Avers that they're devoid of words
And simply cannot talk together.
He gives the nature-fakers fits
Who picture birds in conversation,
And tears their story books to bits
In scientific indignation.

But there's a wren outside my door
That talks whenever I go near him,
And talks so glibly, furthermore,
That I just wish that John could hear him.
Of mornings, when I stroll about,
The while he hymns his glad thanksgiving,
He interrupts himself to shout:
"Hey! Ain't it glorious to be living?"

But if too near his nest I stray
Again he pauses in mid-carol,
Darts past my head, and chatters: "Say!
"You touch my nestlings at your peril!

"We're small, but we have dagger beaks:
"Just try to climb that tree; I dare you!"
And, when I turn away, he shrieks:
"You great big brute! I knew I'd scare you!"

And when he's speaking to a cat
And lets his wrath flow forth unstinted,
I solemnly assure you that
The things he says cannot be printed.
Perhaps John never happened by
When birds' emotions deeply stirred 'em
For, though he's wiser far than I,
I know that birds can talk. I've heard 'em.

'TWAS EVER THUS

WHEN Shakespeare hurdled into fame
And critics praised his lilting lines,
While leading playshops ran his name
Upon their large electric signs,
His colleagues grumbled: "What's the use?
Bill don't know how to write a hit,
But, honest! don't it beat the deuce
The way he gets away with it?

"He never doped a single plot,
He found it easier to borrow,
And we know where the fellow got
His situations—to our sorrow.
Of course we wouldn't knock the lad,
We really do not give a cuss,
But still it sort of makes us mad
To think how much he stole from us.

"We must not be misunderstood,
We hope he will succeed—poor devil,
But—well, his memory's too good
For anyone who's on the level.

He pulls our gags in every play,
And now he's raking in the pelf
And finds how good they get away,
He thinks he thought of them himself.

"Well, they will stand for him a while,
Just now the managers won't try
Good plays that have his beat a mile,
But he will blow up by and by;
He'll do his fling and sing his song
And then the town will leave him flat,
They will not stand for him for long—
They cannot be as thick as that."

* * * * *

This happened many years ago,
And since those old and envious days
Ten thousand dramatists or so
Have written fifty thousand plays,
And every one who groped for fame
And found it fairly in his clutch
Has been derided much the same
As Shakespeare was—and cared as much.

THE PASSING OF AN INSTITUTION

Owing to the scarcity of starch the hard-boiled shirt is to be dispensed with.—NEWS ITEM.

THE hard-boiled shirt! The hard-boiled shirt!
Which Mother pressed and Father wore!
How tender memories revert
To days and things that are no more!
On every seventh morn it rose
And fell upon his writhing chest
Beneath his one black suit of clothes—
His solemn, somber Sunday best.
White! Shining! Destitute of dirt,
An awesome thing, that hard-boiled shirt!

Six days a week in tattered jeans
He hoed the corn and mowed the hay,
And milked the cows to gain the means
To dress up on the seventh day.
On Sunday he would sleep till dawn,
Comb out his whiskers, brush his hair
And put that gleaming garment on,
And lo! Another man was there.
Men called him Deacon then, though "Deek"
Was what they called him through the week!

It lent him dignity and poise,
  It gave him standing in the town;
When he was wearing it the boys
  Would shudder if he chanced to frown.
Alas, those good old days are gone
  In these hard times when ruthless war
Across the land sweeps on and on
  The hard-boiled shirt returns no more.
No rigid vestment, spic and span,
Remains to mark the gentleman!

THE FLY

THE tiger is above deceit,
His eyes are red and glaring;
He warns whomever he would eat
With his ferocious bearing.
The python hisses ere he coils
About his chosen victim,
And he who's crushed within his toils
Can't say the python tricked 'im.
But, ah! the flies that round us hover,
Their infamy is under cover.

They fix us with a timid glance,
Pathetically appealing;
They fascinate us when they dance
Inverted on the ceiling.
Their manner is so circumspect,
Their beauties are so many
That seldom do our eyes detect
The blood on their antennæ.
Yet massacre, assassination
And murder is their occupation.

Associate with crocodiles,
Make camp among gorillas,
Take chances on court-martial trials,
Arranged by Pancho Villas;
Pat playfully a tiger shark
When someone has annoyed him;
Step on a cobra in the dark,
But for the fly—avoid him.
He has no soul nor heart—dod rot him—
The only thing to do is swat him!

EXTRA! ALL ABOUT THE WAY OF THE WORLD

CARUSO can get for a bit of a song the price of an
automobile;
I could sing the same lay and you'd answer me nay
if I asked for the price of a meal.

John D. can write checks for a million apiece, and
get them all cashed at the bank;
I could do the same thing, but I'd land in Sing Sing
in a dungeon depressingly dank.

Henry James could write books that don't mean what
they say, or anything else, but they sell;
If I wrote the same kind they'd examine my mind and
have me restrained for a spell.

The corner policeman can walk on your feet, or
haughtily brush you aside;
If I tried the same trick you would reach for a brick,
and I'd have an ambulance ride.

John Drew can eat lunch as he sits on the stage, and
your eager approval you'll shout;
I could eat the same lunch, but you'd rise in a bunch
and savagely cry " Put 'im out! "

The boss tells statesmen to do what he says without
any palpable reason;
I could do that, of course, but they'd seize me by
force and order me tried for high treason.

This tale has no moral; I try to get mine; the other
man tries to get his;
And although I am sore that he always gets more,
it's merely the way that things is.

THE SIMPLICITY OF CHILDHOOD

I

WHEN Flossie Smith met Trixie Brown upon the street last week,
She threw her arms about her neck and kissed her on the cheek,
With simple, girlish friendliness that fond caress was fraught,
And this is what she said to her: And this is what she thought:

You dear old thing, you look too sweet,
That dress is simply swell,
A stunning costume for the street,
And suits your style so well,
Do come and see me, darling, soon,
That hat's just gorgeous! My!
Come up tomorrow afternoon!
Goodby (smack! smack!)
Goodby!

There's two new wrinkles on her face!
She's getting gross and fat!
That dress is imitation lace—
Great heavens! What a hat!
I know she pads, because she's got
Such weird, outlandish curves,
I hope she doesn't come! Great Scott!
But she gets on my nerves!

THE SIMPLICITY OF CHILDHOOD

II

When Mrs. Jones met Mrs. Green uptown the other day,
She stopped to give her greeting in a kindly, genial way.
And you, yourself, perhaps, can guess if Mrs. Green divined,
When this was in her spoken word: That this was in her her mind:

Good afternoon. So glad we met.
And how is Mr. Green?
You know you still are in my debt—
A social debt I mean—
That game of bridge! Good gracious no!
Don't mention that at all!
I'd quite forgotten it, you know!
You owe a dinner call.

Here's Mrs. Green, I hate to dun
The miserly old fright;
But she *shall* pay me what I won
At bridge the other night.
I simply won't be fleeced by friends
Still I can't make a scene;
And—well, the horrid thing pretends
She don't know what I mean.

THE SIMPLICITY OF CHILDHOOD

III

When Mr. Tom met Mr. Bill upon the avenue,
They went into the nearest bar and ordered drinks for two;
And Tom, with manly openness, declared they'd never part,
And this is what he said to Bill: And this was in his heart:

I like a man that's straight and square;
I know my friends, I do.
I know that I'll be treated fair
If I play fair with you.
When we are doing business, Bo,
Why you're just like my brother;
Them knocks on you I hear don't go,
Come on, let's have another.

I know he's crooked to the bone,
He's just a common con,
He'd not have come here if he'd known
That I was really on;
I'll stake him to a fancy meal
And listen to him talk,
But when we mix up in that deal
I'll watch him like a hawk!

THE SIMPLICITY OF CHILDHOOD

IV

When Freddie White meets Willie Black behind the
alley fence,
He utters no conventional and trite inconsequence;
He eyes the stranger for a while, and sets his teeth
and blinks;
And this is what he says to him, and also what he
thinks:

Hey, wot you lookin' at, you guy?
Suppose my hair is red?
If you keep starin' at me why
I'll come an' punch your head.
You ain't no bute, as I can see,
You're too dressed up an' fat;
I told yer not to look at me,
Take that! (punch, punch) an' that!

THE FARMER'S IDLE WIFE

The farmer's wife is now so occupied with social affairs that she has lost the art of making butter and jam and doing the work of the farm that her grandmother did; this results in a great economic loss to the country.—THE SUBSTANCE OF A GOVERNMENT REPORT ISSUED FROM THE AGRICULTURAL DEPARTMENT.

THE farmer's wife, in early days, got up at half-past two,
And shined the plows and milked the cows and put the prunes to stew.
The breakfast for the hands she'd set upon the stroke of four,
And then she'd bake her bread and cake and scrub the kitchen floor.
But nowadays the farmer's wife has time to call her own,
"Good gracious!" says the Government, "how idle she has grown!"

The farmer's wife, in times gone by, brought up the calves and lambs,
And sacked the oats and fed the shoats and smoked the hickory hams,

And when she'd cooked three great big meals she cheerfully arose
And with her churn sat down to earn the money for her clothes.
But now she often visits 'round and gossips, like as not.
"My goodness," says the Government, "how worthless she has got!"

The farmer's wife, some years ago, was wholly free from nerves,
Twelve hours a day she'd slave away at putting up preserves.
Six children dangling at her skirts, a seventh on her arm,
She'd gamely set herself to get the mortgage off the farm.
But now she sometimes takes a rest, like city women do.
"Great Heavens!" cries the Government, "what is she coming to?"

The farmer's wife departed from this vale of toil and tears
For happier climes, in those old times, when under thirty years.
The farmer got another mate, he somehow always found
The ideal wife who toiled through life and rested—underground.

But now sometimes her years add up their full
alloted sum.
"Great Scott!" exclaims the Government, "how
shiftless she's become!"

WHAT'S THE USE

It was the driver of a van
  Who to his offspring said:
"I'm just a rough-necked workingman
  What labors for his bread.
But you should learn to read and write
  And multiply and sich,
To wear clean shirts and talk polite,
  And some day you'll be rich."

And so the lad to school was sent,
  Where, as the years rolled by,
He learned what conic sections meant,
  And how to extract Pi.
And presently he could discuss
  Such esoteric themes
As differential calculus
  And Freud on Foolish Dreams.

Meanwhile the rough-necked workingman
  With fond paternal joy
Continued driving of his van
  To educate his boy.

And often he would mop his brow
And joyfully declare:
"That kid o' mine ten years from now
Will be a millionaire!"

Today the kid is keeping books
At ten a week for pay,
And from the way the outlook looks
That's where he's going to stay.
And every morning he complains,
In peevish tones and sad:
"If I had brawn instead of brains
I'd be as rich as dad!"

THE VOICE IN THE NIGHT

Upon a midnight, cold and clear,
When slumber marks you for its own,
You waken, with a start, to hear
The tinkling of the telephone—
A sound that, heard in broad daylight,
Possesses a peculiar charm,
But in the watches of the night
Invests your soul with wild alarm.

You rise with palpitating dread,
And through the deep and spectral gloom
You stagger from your downy bed
Unsteadily across the room.
And standing in the wintry breeze,
Your nightie flapping to and fro
Athwart your weak and trembling knees,
You feebly cry, "Hello! Hello!"

"Hello! Hello!" you feebly cry,
With chilling shanks and rising ire,
But you elicit no reply
Except the singing of the wire,

Until in soothing tones and low,
  As if your troubled soul to ease,
A lady answers your "Hello"
  And softly says, "Excuse it, please!"

"Excuse it, please!" when one is torn
  From gentle slumber's twilight zone
As frightened as if Gabriel's horn
  Its awful reveille had blown!
When ripped untimely from his bed
  When every nerve that he has got
Is set on edge with cold and dread,
  Will he excuse it? He will NOT!

IN BEHALF OF THE MOVIES

WHEN Willie inverts a cup custard
On grandfather's silvery head,
Deposits the cat in his sister's new hat
Or saws off the legs of the bed,
Or secretly stuffs the piano
With grasshoppers, crickets or such,
It's a pretty safe bet that the dear little pet
Has been to the movies too much.

Whenever the child of your neighbor
Gives forth a terrific "Boo-hoo!"
And you find she is bound to a stake in the ground
By the coils of a clothes-line lassoo,
It's safe to conjecture that Willie
Has been overfed on the art
You often have seen when they flash on the screen
The prowess of Fairbanks and Hart.

Yet we who are old can remember
The kids of an earlier time
Who fed on the tales of the wild Western trails
That reeked with all manner of crime;
When rifles rang out in the barnyard,

And the rooster was watchful and spry,
Who got to his roost when the volley was loosed
When the death-dealing bullets flew by.

And when the last rough stuff is censored
And movies are gentle and mild
As reformers could ask who are charged with the task
Of making life fit for the child,
The child will proceed at his leisure
To break all attempts at restraint,
For a kid is a kid, and dear heaven forbid
That he ever behave like a saint!

TO A SPECTRE AUNT

Oh, spinster aunt I never had
(At your first word I nearly fainted),
I still don't know you, yet I'm glad
You came and tried to get acquainted.
The medium was in her trance—
And in their trances ghosts inspire 'em—
She asked if I had any aunts;
I told her "Yes," and you cried "Hiram!"

You charmed me with your pleasing chat,
Your accents growing ever fonder;
I liked the way you told me that
You felt so happy over yonder;
You said that Uncle Bill and Sis
Were much improved by their translation.
I'm sure I never asked you this—
You volunteered the information.

You whispered that my lot in life
In after years would be a glad one,
But that I couldn't trust my wife—
I thought that queer—I never had one!

You said George Wright could throw some light
On stocks in which I was investing;
I have no stocks, I don't know Wright—
But still your news was interesting.

You said I'd had the scarlet rash
And didn't have a good digestion,
And then you vanished like a flash
Ere I could ask a single question.
Oh, spinster aunt, no matter where
The soft ethereal breezes blow you,
On my arrival over there
I'll look you up—I'd like to know you!

TO A MOVIE CHILD

Oh, little loving Movie Child,
What woes are yours to carry!
Your mother gets a little riled
And throws you from the ferry!
The dastard villains, scowling black,
To show how much they hate you,
Affix you to a railroad track
Where trains may decimate you.
Although your sentiments are pure
As William Jennings Bryan's,
The Arab sheiks are always sure
To feed you to the lions.

I've seen a widow, pale and wild,
Amid the flames that burned her,
Observing, "Fireman, save my child!"
And lo! The fireman spurned her.
I've seen you penned inside a lair
By some base-hearted sinner,
About the time a grizzly bear
Was coming home to dinner.

I've seen you smiling with delight
While busily unwrapping
A big round stick of dynamite,
Whose fuse was brightly snapping.

And always you have worn a smile
So tender and forgiving,
To show that you were free from guile
And felt the joy of living.
Though scheming scoundrels plainly spoke
The evil they intended,
You treated them like gentlefolk
And never seemed offended.
Full many an hour you've beguiled,
Full many a thrill I owe you;
But you're so good, dear Movie Child,
I would not care to know you.

THE OUIJA BOARD

WHEN Madam took the Ouija Board at my request, and made
An effort to communicate with Herbert Spencer's shade,
And Herbert presently came forth and spelled a note, which said:
"My son, I ain't had no regrets at all since I been dead.
If you set tight a little while and watch the Madam's hand,
I'll learn you all there is to know about the spirit land,"
I thought, although at the unknown I do not like to scoff,
That Herbert must have changed a bit since he has shuffled off.

When Cyclops, also by request, obliged by coming through
And set the Ouija Board at work, as all good spirits do,

I own that I was quite surprised when he said:
"Never fear,
There ain't no cause to worry, lad, your Uncle Cy
is here.
I seen your granddad yesterday, he's looking fine
and well,
I hope you'll call me every night, there's such a lot
to tell."
I could not help reflecting, as he wandered out of
range,
That some things in the spirit world are marvelously
strange.

"Can you call up George Eliot?" "Why, sure,"
the Madam said,
"This Ouija Board will send you word from anyone
that's dead."
She placed her fingers on the board, and lo! the
thing was done;
She wrote, slow spelling out each word: "I'm old
man Eliot's son,
I know a lot of friends of yours; we have the self-
same joys,
But not the sorrows and the trials we did when we
was boys."
I sighed and o'er my beaded brow I passed my
handkerchief,
"These spirit miracles," said I, "are almost past
belief."

A BLOOMING SHAME

It's reported in the trusty Sunday cables
That the little English children, bless their hearts,
Are enamored of the glamour of the substitute for grammar
Which the transatlantic movie show imparts.
In the title of the Fairbanks-Chaplin pictures
There's a certain brutal punch and vulgar tang,
And the hapless little blighters (they're all cinema first nighters)
Are becoming too adept in Yankee slang.

It is harmful to the adolescent Briton
To observe a giddy youth upon the screen
Who bestows his hard-earned thick 'uns among females he calls chickens
Over whom he says he's wild instead of keen.
Little children quickly catch these horrid phrases,
Never thinking how debased it is and wrong
When the lady with the poodle doesn't murmur "Toodle-oodle!"
When she waves her hand at parting, but "So long!"

How it pains the proud and proper British parent
When his son and heir, a toppy little chap,
Quarreling with his brother Willie, rather than remark, "You silly!"
Substitutes the awful expletive, "You sap!"
How the British mother shudders in amazement
When her daughter with disgusting Yankee pep
Doesn't say, "My word, old topper, you will come a blooming cropper!"
But observes with blunt directness, "Watch yer step!"

And the elegant, soft-spoken British nursemaid,
How she suffers when the children in her care,
As they munch their morning kippers, speak of kids instead of nippers,
And, when meaning "Aw Gawan!" say, "Get the air!"
We should really ask our motion picture magnates
If they won't put more refinement in their game,
Introducing slang expressions in His Majesty's possessions
Is a blighted, bally, blooming, bloody shame!

HOW DOTH THE LITTLE BUSY BEE?

A LOVELY insect is the bee—
  A thousand bards, I guess, have said it—
But just the same, we cannot see
  That he deserves especial credit,
Nor shall we waste our readers' time
  With fulsome and enraptured phrases
And make of them a fawning rhyme
  To sing the small impostor's praises.

The bee does work, that's true enough;
  He violates all union hours
In batting round the fields to stuff
  Himself with honey culled from flowers.
But if he paused upon a limb
  To rest or gossip or palaver,
His fellow-bees would light on him
  And he'd be left a cold cadaver.

He never quits or goes on strikes
  Or visits with his idle neighbors,
But that is not because he likes
  To be engaged on toilsome labors.

He never loafs, but that's because
  The craven creature is afraid to,
He knows the apiarian laws,
  And only works because he's made to.

So often he's been sung about
  That in his silly little noddle
He hasn't got the slightest doubt
  That he is an industrial model.
We'll never praise the priggish bug;
  The industry he makes such show of
Reminds us of a lot of smug
  Vainglorious people that we know of.

THE HIGHER COW CULTURE

In Wisconsin it has been found that cows provided with beautiful surroundings are far more productive than the common cow of the barnyard and stanchels.—NEWS ITEM.

WHEN first our cow, once strong and hale
And buoyant with the joy of living,
Began, along last Spring, to fail
It filled us all with black misgiving.
For cows, when grass grows lush and green
Should give their minds to getting fatter,
And when they're wan, and sad of mien,
There's something serious the matter.

The vet suggested change of food
And restfulness and calm and quiet
But still she seemed to droop and brood
Despite the rest and altered diet.
At last one day, oppressed with gloom
And with her heart like lead within her
She wandered in the dining room
Where we were sitting down to dinner.

She looked about her with delight
And sighed with deep appreciation;
(Our furniture is Hepplewhite—
Nice tasteful stuff—though imitation)
She viewed the paintings on the wall
Serene, attentive and quiescent,
And one who knew the cow at all
Could see that she was convalescent.

And now she has her own boudoir
Of tile and marble, brightly burnished
And all her bovine sisters are
Supplied with rooms as nicely furnished.
They all are sleek and happy-eyed
Their gratitude they cannot utter,
But, since their souls are satisfied
We're simply swamped with cream and butter!

IT CAN'T BE DONE

We remember when we saw "The Lights o' London"
That it never struck the audience as odd,
When the villain, badly baffled, and in danger of the scaffold
Quoth, sincerely and convincingly, "my——!"
There was something in a few well-chosen cuss-words
Which was pleasing to the proletariat;
Three or four strong imprecations gave a zip to situations
That would otherwise have fallen pretty flat.

But they're getting more meticulous in London,
When the hero cops the lady and the pelf,
There is never any thrill in the remonstrance of the villain,
For he's forced to do his cursing to himself.
Though convulsed with boiling fury by his troubles,
He must guard against the slightest verbal slips
For a governmental power will confine him in the Tower
If he even frames a swear-word with his lips.

They are sending lynx-eyed censors to the movies;
Psycho-analyists they are—remorseless birds
Who derive keen satisfaction as they watch the drama's action
In deciphering a man's unuttered words,
And if any actor, moved by inspiration
To pronounce a single pantomimic d—n! *

Just to make the scene intenser, is detected by the censor,
He discovers that he's got into a jam.

Now we strongly disapprove of bar-room language
Such as thieves and gunmen bandy in their rage,
But mild oaths in moderation used to voice strong indignation
Have been heard since the invention of the stage.
And we think an absolutely cussless movie,
Though with fascinating crime it overflowed
And was perfect in construction, and a masterly production,
Would go busted on the second night it showed.

* Censored.

THE LOST VOICE

SEATED one day in the office
Distracted and ill at ease,
I wildly jiggled the phone-hook
And Central said, "Number, please?"
I know not what number I gave her,
'Tis vanished beyond recall.
I know I was flabbergasted
That she answered the phone at all!

It filled me with sheer amazement,
It filled me with fierce delight,
For when she repeated the number
She actually got it right!
I glued the phone to my eardrum,
And my heart beat high and fast
As I said to myself, "Eureka!
I shall get that call at last."

I waited, and waited, and waited;
Once more I seized the hook
Between my thumb and finger
And shook, and shook, and shook.

But I listened and listened vainly,
The sun had waned and set
And the stars were out, but Central
Had made no answer yet.

It may be she'll answer some time,
But I wonder now and then
If only when I'm in heaven
Shall I hear that voice again.

THE MOVIE SUBSTITUTE

(His Plaint)

You have sobbed when the heroine lady
  Said "Bah!" with a touch of disdain,
As the villain (the cur) bound a rope around her
  And tied her in front of a train.
The debacle likely to happen
  You dreaded extremely to see,
But there wasn't a Jane there in front of the
    train,
  That's the job that they pass out to me!

You have wept when you gazed at the hero
  As he leaped from the top of the cliff,
"Ah me," you have said, "when he lights he'll be
    dead,
  That villain's a murderous stiff."
But the hero, at that exact moment
  Was home and in bed and asleep,
Those leading part chumps are not cast for the
    jumps
  I'm paged when the boss wants a leap.

And when there's a general rough-house
  And someone has got to get hit
With a beer keg or rock, good and hard on his block,
  The real movie actors all quit.
And when they're a little bit careless,
  As they frequently happen to be,
And a man's put to bed with a hole in his head,
  I'm the boy that the doc comes to see.

They put me in cages with lions,
  Who think it's a nice little jest
To paw me around as I lie on the ground
  And practice new bites on my chest.
Whenever in case of a mix-up
  Some gent may get hurt pretty bad,
The actors aren't there—they're too easy to scare
  And too valuable—I am the lad!

THE VAMP PASSES

Vamp plays are no longer popular with photo-play audiences.—A MOVIE SCOUT.

No longer the wife of the hero
  Need swallow a piteous sigh,
And stifle the storm that convulses her form
  As she kisses her husband good-by.
No longer her wife's intuition
  Can waken the fear in her breast
That he's going to decamp with a red-headed Vamp
  On the nine-fifty train for the West.

Oh! The Vamp was a merciless creature,
  Whenever she met a young wife
She would powder her nose, strike an insolent pose
  And sneer (and they sneer like a knife!)
And the kindest and lovingest husbands
  Who never before had backslid
Would lamp at the Vamp like a rah-rahing scamp,
  And coyly observe, "Oh, you kid!"

No opulent home could be happy:
  The Vamp's subterranean stealth
In the very first reel never failed to reveal
  That the husband was rolling in wealth,

And, putting her gauziest dress on,
She looked and she looked and she looked
At the poor millionaire, who would never beware
Until he was hopelessly hooked.

I grieve that the Vamp has departed,
Though of course I could never approve
When she harrowed the lives of those innocent wives
Still she DID keep events on the move,
And, watching her witching behavior,
I have frequently hankered to see
Just how hard I'd resist if a Vamp should insist,
On working the Vamp stuff on me!

Doughboy Ditties:

NELL—AND OTHERS

I WASN'T fightin' for money; I wasn't fightin' for fame,
Or to save the world for Democrats, as some o' them statesmen claim;
But I waded into the Boches whenever I got a chance,
An' kept 'em jumpin' backward till they jumped plumb out o' France.
There wasn't much time for thinkin' when the shot an' the shrapnel fell,
But I reckon I was fightin' for a girl o' the name o' Nell
(An' a girl named Sue, an' a girl named Mame, an' a girl named Flo as well).

I see what they done to Flanders, an' it kind o' occurred to me
That we didn't want no Boches on our own side of the sea,
For they didn't act like humans, an 'they didn't fight like men,
An' the safest way to deal with 'em, was to head 'em home again.

Just what I thought in the thick of it is thunderin' hard to tell,
But I reckon that I was thinkin' of a girl o' the name o' Nell
(An' a girl named Jane, an' a girl named Maud, an' a girl named May as well).

There's always a little girl at home that you sort o' wish was there
When a little General comes along an' hands you a Craw de Gare.
There's always a girl that you hope to meet when the troopship hits the pier
When you've seen the last o 'the kind of Janes that y' kid with over here.
There's always a girl you are homesick for when you've been away a spell,
An' that's the girl I was fightin' for—a girl o' the name o' Nell,
(An' a girl named Lou, an' a girl named Ide, an' a girl named Bess as well).

Doughboy Ditties:

IN LINE

It ain't policin' the roads o' France
(Which we do with a spade an' pick);
It ain't the washin' o' shirts and pants,
When the mud is especial thick;
It ain't a-keepin' the Boche at work
In his towns on the rollin' Rhine.
What gets us sore, now there ain't no war,
Is standin' around in line.

For we stand in line at inspection
An' we stand in line for our slum;
An' we stand in line for our mug of wine
When the water is on the bum.
We stand in line at the "Y" canteen
For doughnuts an' pie an' things.
An' I kind o' fear we will still be here
Till we stand in line for our wings.

There's nothin' a feller would class as fun
In bossin' a Boche around;
The gutteral talk of the average Hun
Is hardly a cheerin' sound.

But we'd do all that an' a lot beside,
With never a growl or whine.
What keeps us plumb dissatisfied
Is standin' around in line.

We will stand in line for our letters
If the mail gets in to-day.
We will stand in line till the Cap can sign
The orders to draw our pay.
An' it looks as if we'd be dreamin' still
Of a certain street in the States
Where the bright lights shine, when we stand in line
For our turn at the Pearly Gates.

Doughboy Ditties:

THOUGHTS ON PIE

At night, when we camped by the old chateau,
An' the yellow moon looked down,
I used to dream of a girl I know—
A girl in the old home town.
I dreamed o' the words she said to me
The day that we said good-by,
When I left her to cross the rollin' sea—
But mostly I dreamed o' pie.

For there's girls in England and girls in France
An' girls on the windin' Rhine;
You are always meetin' a lovin' glance
Anywheres up the line.
You can always sit in a game o' hearts
Where the ante's a gentle sigh,
But the scarcest thing in these foreign parts
Is a hunk o' regular pie.

An' now that the packet is headed home
An' the lights fade on the shore,
As I watch the gloaming begin to gloam
I am dreamin' my dreams once more.

Again I dream o' that last good-by
  Ere I sailed o'er the rollin' brine,
But mostly I dream o' the big mince pie
  That soon will be mine—all mine.

There'll be always girls, if you look around,
  Wherever your feet may stray;
Whether you're outward or homeward bound,
  They'll never be far away.
But when you're guardin' a dreary post
  Or watchin' the shrapnel fly,
The thing that you sure will miss the most
  Is that good old home-made pie.

Doughboy Ditties:

HEALTHY

An army doctor has assured members of the Army of Occupation that the climate along the Rhine is more healthful than that of America.

When we're sick o' keepin' watch on country cross-
roads,
Lest some Captain's private flivver go astray,
When we're sick of cleaning skillets in these greasy
German billets,
And are hungerin' to see the U.S.A.,
Then the Doc he comes along an' looks us over,
An' he grins at all the kickers in the line,
Sayin' to us, "What's the matter? Ain't you dough-
boys gettin' fatter?
Don't you know the climate's healthy on the
Rhine?"

"Healthy climate," says the Doc. Well, who'll
deny it?
We can eat our weight in chow at every meal.
But when settin' round an' pinin' for to see the home-
lights shinin'
It don't make a lot o' difference how you feel.

I ain't longin' for pneumonia nor nothin'
Bein' sick would never fill me full o' cheer.
But I'd just as leave or leaver have the "flu" or typhoid fever
Back in Harlem as be healthy over here.

I admit that I could lick my weight in wildcats,
But there ain't no wildcats over here to lick.
There is nothin' here more thrillin' than this drillin', drillin', drillin',
An' it makes you sore to think you gotta stick.
There is things in life beside a healthy climate,
There is things that's just as good as bein' well—
Nothin' doin', nothin' stirrin'; nothin' worth your while occurrin'—
It is healthy—sure it's healthy—but it's hell!

THE END

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